

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for providing Digital Rights Management-protected (DRM-protected) electronic content to user equipment whose operation is at least in part supported by a platform, the system comprising:

a platform DRM module;

a rendering server for receiving the DRM-protected content and supplying a corresponding usage right validation request to the DRM module to request validation of usage rights associated with the content, and for rendering the content according to a response to the usage right validation request;

an interface for enabling the DRM module to cooperate with a support module in an application domain; and

registration logic that registers the support module with the DRM module and associates the support module with one or more content types,

wherein if the DRM module determines from the usage right validation request that the content is of one of the content types associated with the support module, then the usage right validation request is supplied to the support module and processed by the support module.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein when the content type is not associated with a registered support module, the usage right validation request is processed by the DRM module.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the DRM module parses a license file corresponding to the content to determine the usage rights when processing the validation request.

4. The system of claim 1, further comprising the support module, and wherein the support module parses a license file corresponding to the content to determine the usage rights when processing the validation request.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the DRM module provides a validation reply to the rendering server to indicate whether or not the usage rights are successfully validated.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the DRM module further comprises decryption means, and the rendering server, upon receiving a validation reply indicating a successful validation, supplies the content to the DRM module for decryption, receives decrypted content back from the DRM module, and renders the decrypted content, the rendered decrypted content being made available to the user equipment for use according to the associated usage rights.

7. The system of claim 5, further comprising the support module, wherein the support module further comprises decryption means, and the rendering server, upon receiving a validation reply indicating a successful validation, supplies the content to the support module for decryption, receives

decrypted content back from the support module, and renders the decrypted content, said rendered decrypted content being made available to the user equipment for use according to the associated usage rights.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of support modules each being registered with the DRM module for one or more associated content types, wherein no two support modules are registered for the same content type.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein, when the DRM-protected content is determined by the DRM module to be one of the associated content types, the DRM module sends an event signal that comprises the name of the content file and a request for license validation.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the event signal further comprises a request for a decryption key.

11. The system of claim 1, further comprising a database for storing and updating records corresponding to the associated usage rights, said database being accessible to either or both of the DRM module and the support module for managing usage rights.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein one or more corresponding decryption keys for use in decrypting the content are logically linked to each record in the database.

13. A method of providing DRM-protected electronic content to user equipment to user equipment whose operation is at least in part supported by a platform, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving, at a rendering server, the DRM-protected content;

requesting, by the rendering server, validation of usage rights associated with the content from a DRM module within the platform;

determining whether a content type of the content is associated with a support module in an application domain;

supplying, whenever the content type is associated with a support module, the validation request to the associated support module by the DRM module for processing by the support module cooperatively with the DRM module via an interface with the support module;

processing, whenever the content type is not associated with a support module, the validation request at the DRM module;

responding, by the DRM module, to the validation request; and

rendering the content according to the validation response.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein, when the validation response indicates a successful validation, the step of rendering further comprises:

supplying the content to the DRM module for decryption;

receiving and rendering the decrypted content at the rendering server;
and
providing the rendered decrypted content to the user equipment for use according to the associated usage rights.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein, when the validation response indicates a successful validation, the step of rendering further comprises:
supplying the content to the support module for decryption;
receiving and rendering the decrypted content at the rendering server;
and
providing the rendered decrypted content to the user equipment for use according to the associated usage rights.

16. The method of claim 13, comprising the preliminary step of registering the support module with the DRM module, the registration providing, to the DRM module, a list of one or more DRM content types associated with the support module.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the step of registering the support module further comprises providing, to the DRM module, a list of DRM functions to be performed by the support module, the list selectively including decryption of DRM-protected files.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein processing the validation request, by either the support module or the DRM module, includes parsing a license file corresponding to the content to determine the usage rights.

19. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of supplying the validation request to the associated support module comprises sending an event signal that comprises the name of the content file and a request for license validation.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the event signal further comprises a request for a decryption key.

21. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of maintaining a database for storing and updating records corresponding to the associated usage rights.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein one or more corresponding decryption keys used for decrypting the content are logically linked to each record in the database.